

MARRIAGE

There were 6,612 marriages solemnized in Montana in 2001, an increase in the number but decrease in the previous year's rate. Except for a brief resurgence in Montana's rate between 1988 and 1992, the trends in marriage rates for both Montana and the United States have been in long-term decline since 1980 (see **Figure 60**).

Figure 60

MARRIAGE RATES MONTANA AND THE UNITED STATES, 1967-2001

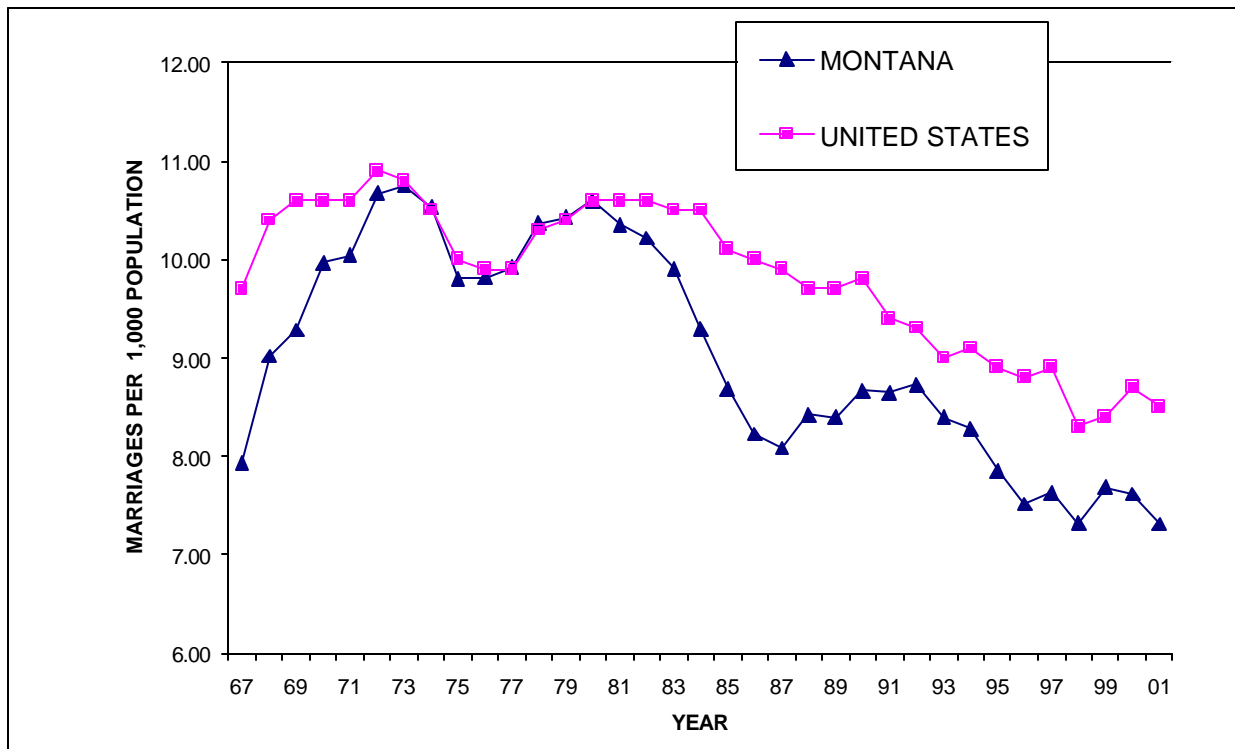


Table 22 shows the frequency of marriage by month in the year 2001. In the last decade, approximately 60% of the marriages solemnized in Montana occurred during the summer and fall months (June through October).

The ages of brides and grooms, by age groups and prior marital status, are shown in **Table 23**. Nearly two-thirds (63.4%) of the grooms and more than three-fifths (62.2%) of the brides married for the first time in 2001. Median ages of brides and grooms for the previous five years are shown in **Table 25**. The median age for first-time brides in 2001 was 23 years and that of first-time grooms was 25.

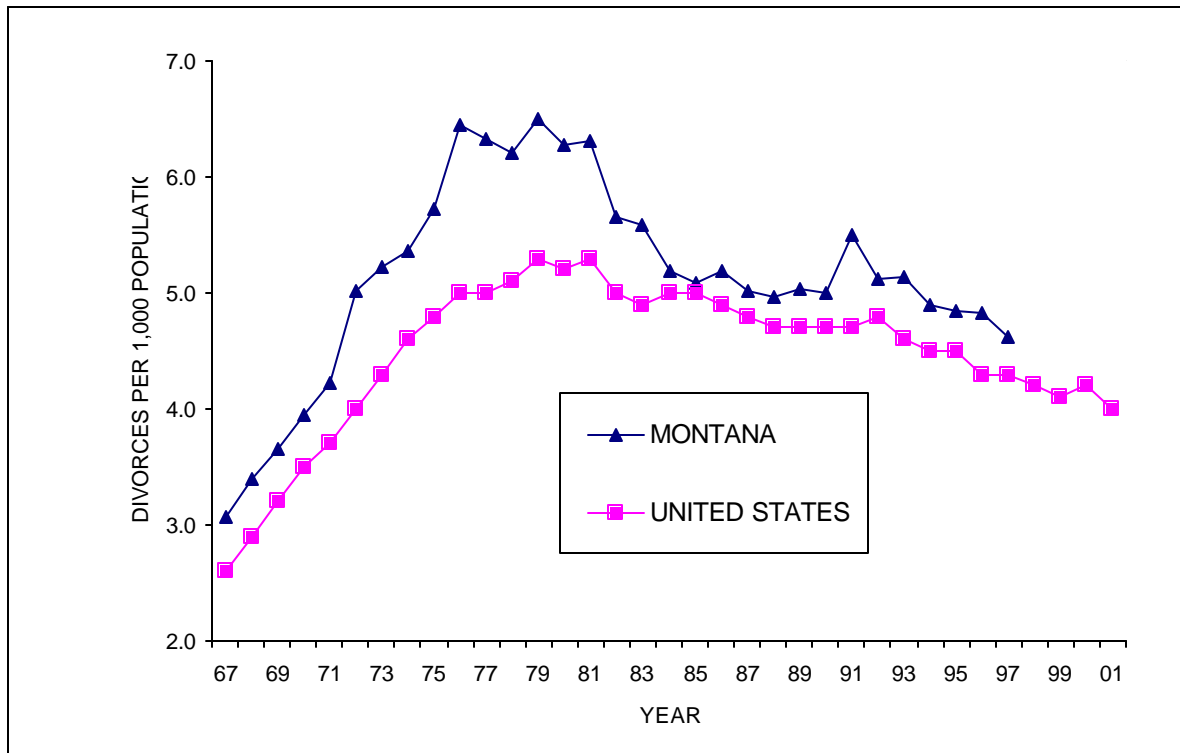
Just over half (53.3 %) of all marriages performed in Montana in 2001 were first marriages for both the bride and the groom. The frequency of such marriages is shown in **Table 24** by age of bride and groom. In 2001, slightly more than half (52.2 %) of those marrying for the first time, and marrying a first-time bride or groom, were in the same five-year age group as their spouse.

MARITAL TERMINATION

In October of 1998 the collection procedures for Montana's marital termination (marital dissolution and invalid marriage) records changed; therefore, the records from 1998 through 2001 are unavailable for analysis. However, it can be seen that the trend in marital termination for Montana was roughly parallel to the national trend from 1967 through 1997, as **Figure 61** shows, although the Montana rates have been consistently higher.

Figure 61

MARITAL TERMINATION RATES MONTANA AND THE UNITED STATES, 1967-2001



Montana's rate of marital termination per 1,000 population is shown in **Table 21**. During the past 20 years, this rate decreased from a high of 6.5 in 1979 to 4.6 in 1997.